About LEVEL news

Contents

Water Levels Move Closer to Average

St. Lawrence Board Public Meeting Draws Large Crowd

Lake Superior Board Public Meeting

June Precipitation

June Outflows

Water Levels for the Great Lakes and Montreal Harbour ... *a monthly bulletin from Canadian Hydrographic Service*

About the monthly Water Level bulletin

June Precipitation Over the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term June average:

Great Lakes Basin	107%
Lake Erie (including Lake St. Clair)	72%
Lake Superior	108%
Lakes Michigan-Huron	107%
Lake Ontario	146%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

June Outflows From

LEVEL news

Volume 6, Number 7 **July 6, 1998**

Risk of Shore Damage Continues to Decline

Water Levels Move Closer to Average

Levels on all of the Great Lakes except Superior moved closer to their average during June, for the second month in a row. While heavy rainfall was experienced in many areas late in June, dry weather during much of the month, combined with the residual effect of dry conditions during May, caused levels to remain static or decline at a time when they are usually still rising. All of the lakes are significantly below their levels of one year ago.

Lakes Ontario and Erie both experienced a decline in levels of about eight centimetres from the beginning of June to the end of the month. On average, these lakes would usually experience minimal change in levels over this period. High outflows from both lakes and below average rainfall over Lake Erie's basin contributed to the decline in levels. As a result, Lake Ontario was 16 cm above average at the beginning of July, while Lake Erie was 41 cm above average.

Lakes St. Clair and Huron experienced little change in their levels from the beginning to the end of June. In fact, Lake Huron has had almost no change in its level since early April. At the beginning of July, the two lakes were 41 cm and 30 cm, respectively, above average.

Lake Superior was the only one of the Great Lakes to experience a near average increase in its level during June. At the beginning of July it was eight centimetres below average. The outflow from Lake Superior during July will remain at 1780 cubic metres per second, which is the same as the outflow during June.

During June, Lake Ontario's level was 12 cm lower than during June 1997, while the other lakes were all between 23 cm and 26 cm lower than one year ago. This reduction in levels has reduced the risk of damages to shore properties during storms. If no more than average rainfall occurs over the Great Lakes basin over the next several months, lake levels should continue to steadily decline. By this fall, significant shore damages would likely occur only if unusually severe wind storms hit the lakes.

St. Lawrence Board Public Meeting Draws Large Crowd

the Great Lakes	As a percentage of the long-term June average:
Lake Superior	81%
Lake Erie	114%
Lake Huron	105%
Lake Ontario	119%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

Last Issue

Next Issue

Issue Index

Summary information for "LEVEL*news*"

The International St. Lawrence River Board of Control heard calls to both increase and decrease the outflows from Lake Ontario at its public meeting in Sackets Harbor, New York on June 16th. Many shoreline property owners from Lake Ontario voiced complaints that, in spite of the very high outflows from the lake, the level of Lake Ontario rose too high this spring and led to damage to their properties. Those who live and boat downstream on the St. Lawrence River expressed dissatisfaction with the low water levels in parts of the river that were a result of the high flows, and asked that more consideration be given to their needs. The Board explained that both of these conditions stem from the unusually large volumes of water flowing into and through Lake Ontario this past winter and spring due to the combination of high runoff within its own drainage basin and continued high flows from Lake Erie. About 150 people attended the Sackets Harbor meeting.

Lake Superior Board Public Meeting

On June 23rd the International Lake Superior Board of Control held its annual meeting with the public in South Haven, Michigan. An overflow crowd of about 140 attended the meeting, held for the first time by this Board on the shores of Lake Michigan. Most of those in attendance were owners of shoreline property with concerns about shoreline erosion. Dr. Rob Nairn, an independent authority on shore erosion processes, described how wind generated waves were the cause of shore erosion and determined long-term erosion rates. He explained that for eroding bluff type shores, a change in lake level would only cause a change in the elevation where the waves erode the shore. As a result, a lowering of water levels would only delay the recession of a bluff temporarily while the waves removed the soil at a lower elevation. Eventually, depending on the make up of the soil and amount of wave action, the waves would again reach the foot of the bluff and it would continue to recede. This viewpoint was not well received by many of the shoreline property owners in attendance.

The Lake Superior Board reviewed the current lake level conditions and answered questions about the limitations of regulating Lake Superior outflows to try to balance the levels of Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron. The audience asked the Board to investigate ways that might lead to lowering the levels of all the Great Lakes.

Top of Page
Français | Contact Us | Help | Search | Canada Site
What's New | Topics | Publications | Weather | Home | About Us

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